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# CH 702 Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers

Meesaeng Lee Choi

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**CH 702**  
**NICENE AND POST-NICENE FATHERS**  
(not the final version)

Meesaeng Lee Choi, Ph.D.  
Office (AD 402): 859-858-2046  
Home (Study): 859-887-2828  
meesaeng\_choi@asburyseminary.edu

3 credit hour units, Fall 2005  
Class: Wednesdays 1:00-3:45 pm  
Office Hours: Wed 4-5 pm, Thursdays 2:30-4:30 pm

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course will explore the theology of the Golden Age of Latin and Greek Patristic Literature from Aphrahat to John of Damascus in terms of the doctrine of God, Trinity, Christology, and theological anthropology. We will do so in a manner which will enhance critical thinking as we discuss possible meanings of selected texts. This process, intense in many ways, should enhance the ability of students not only to understand the thought of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers in greater depth, but also to think historically and critically. Beyond this, the course will be attentive to the relevance of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers for theology and ministry today.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to do all of the following:

1. Identify the major doctrinal themes in the theology of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers.
2. Develop an awareness of historiographical concerns in the interpretation of patristic theology, especially in terms of limited or biased perspectives.
3. Explore the interplay between religion and culture (church and society) especially in terms of the theological developments of the fourth and fifth centuries as reflected in patristic literature.
4. Display an extensive knowledge of the theological distinctions and nuances employed by Post-Nicene Fathers, especially the Cappadocians, in the articulation of the doctrine of the Trinity.
5. Demonstrate an understanding of the continuing significance of Nicene and Post-Nicene theology, especially in the areas of the doctrine of God, Christology, and theological anthropology.
6. Conceive one's calling as a minister of the gospel in light of the history of the universal church/in the vast company of the redeemed community.
7. Articulate the relevance of patristic resources for effective ministry today.

**REQUIRED BOOKS**

1. Christopher A. Hall, *Reading Scripture with the Church Fathers* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1998).
2. Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition, 100-600* (The University of Chicago Press, 1971). BT25 P43
3. Basil the Great, *On the Holy Spirit* (St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2001).
4. *Ephrem the Syrian: Hymns*, trans. by Kathleen E. McVey (Paulist Press, 1989).
5. One of Three Options
  - a. Purchase: Phillip Schaff, ed., *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, First and Second Series. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co.
  - b. Use library reference.
  - c. Use internet and produce your own copy:
    - 1) Early Church Fathers: [www.ccel.org/fathers2/](http://www.ccel.org/fathers2/)
    - 2) Wikipedia: [www.wikipedia.org/wiki/nicene and post-nicene fathers](http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/nicene_and_post-nicene_fathers)
    - 3) New Advent: [www.newadvent.org/fathers/](http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/)
    - 4) One more additional website: [home.flash.net/~smabry/docs/fathers.htm](http://home.flash.net/~smabry/docs/fathers.htm)

**COLLATERAL BOOKS**

1. Quasten, Johannes. *Patrology 3: The Golden Age of Greek Patristic Literature from the Council of Nicaea to the Council of Chalcedon*. Allen, TX: Christian Classics, 1983. BT67. Q3 1983 v3
2. Quasten, Johannes. *Patrology 4: The Golden Age of Latin Patristic Literature from the Council of Nicaea to the Council of Chalcedon*. Allen, TX: Christian Classics, 1986. BT67. Q3 1983 v4
3. *Athanasius: The Life of St. Anthony and the Letter to Marcellinus*, trans. by Robert C. Gregg (Paulist Press, 1980). BR1720 A6 A8313 1980
4. Cyril of Jerusalem. *Lectures on the Christian Sacraments*. St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1995. BX2200.C99 C9 1977
5. Gregory of Nyssa. *The Life of Moses*. Paulist Press, 1978. BS580.M6 G7313
6. *John Cassian: Conferences*, trans. by Colm Luibheid, intro. by Owen Chadwick (Paulist Press, 1985). BX2435. C36. 1985

**Reference:**

1. Berardino, Angelo D. and Basil Studer, eds. *History of Theology: The Patristic Period*. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1997. BT21.2 S7713 1996
2. Burns, J. Patout, ed. *Theological Anthropology*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981. BT701.2 B87
3. Charry, Ellen T. *By the Renewing of Your Minds: The Pastoral Function of Christian Doctrine*. New York and Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1997: 85-152. BT22 C45
4. Froehlich, Karlfried, ed. *Biblical Interpretation in the Early Church*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1984. BS500 B55
5. Hall, Christopher A. *Learning Theology with the Church Fathers*. Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 2002. BT25 H33
6. Kelly, J. N. D. *Early Christian Doctrines*. Harper Collins Publishers, 1978. BT25 K4

7. Norris, Richard A., ed. *The Christological Controversy*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980. BT198 C44
8. Rusch, William G., ed. *The Trinitarian Controversy*. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1980. BT109 T74
9. Simonetti, Manlio, ed. *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: Matthew 1-13*, general ed. Thomas Oden. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2001. BS2575.3 M29
10. Tanner, Kenneth and Christopher A. Hall, eds. *Ancient and Postmodern Christianity: Paleo-Orthodoxy in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (Essays in Honor of Thomas C. Oden)*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002. BR50 A535
11. Young, Frances M. *From Nicaea to Chalcedon: A Guide to the Literature and its Background* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983). BR205 Y68

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

1. **Attendance and Class Participation (10%)**
    - a. If you attend all the classes, you will get **one additional point** in the final grading.
    - b. When you miss a class, you will lose one point. **Three “Cuts” Mean Automatic Fail:** you can miss up to two class days (or 6 hours total).
  2. **Summary/Interaction Papers from Reading Assignment (15%)**
    - a. You must complete all assigned readings prior to each class session (see ‘the Course Schedule and Outline’). See Handout “How to Read Academic Texts Critically.”
    - b. Write a brief summary/interaction paper and use it in the class for discussion, then turn it in at the end of each class.
  3. **Research Paper (25%)**
    - a. Choose one figure from the selected texts. (Please decide by the second class period.)
    - b. Prepare a 7-9 page research paper (email your paper to your respondent and the professor by a week before Thursday midnight). Post your paper in the Course Center by Sunday midnight.
    - c. Make a 20-30 minute presentation during the assigned class time.
  4. **Final Paper (40%)**
    - a. Develop your research paper to a 20-25 page final paper (for those who want to use this paper for future graduate school work, a 25-35 page paper would be allowed).
    - b. Turn it in by **Dec 14, 2:00 pm**.
- On Bibliography**
- c. Develop a bibliography on the figure of your research paper with both primary sources and secondary works you can find in the Asbury Seminary Library. Make sure to include not only books but also articles.
  - d. Add some of the best sources you wish our library could hold for future studies in this area. To do this, you might do on-line book searches (e.g., amazon.com or bookfinder.com), or visit the websites of some important publishing companies (Baker Academics, ST Vladimir's Seminary Press, etc.).
5. **One Response Paper (10%)**
    - a. Choose one from the presentation papers by others.

- b. Prepare a response paper (approximately 900 words, single spaced, with a standard 12-point font like Times New Roman and one inch margins).
- c. Present your response paper following the presentation of the research paper.

### **CRITERIA FOR GRADING RESEARCH PAPERS**

1. Grasp of basic historical and theological information.
2. Appropriate use of primary and relevant secondary sources.
3. Attention to lessons the modern/postmodern Church can learn from the subject
4. Depth and creativity in handling subject.
5. Appropriate use of **Inclusive Language**: The seminary encourages all students to make use of language, in reference to human beings, that is inclusive rather than needlessly exclusive. It is a mark of a good communicator to build bridges rather than barriers; therefore, such language should be used in all written work and oral presentations. The *Seminary 2001-03 Catalog* stands as an example of recommended usage.
6. **Form of Written Work**: The use of Turabian **correctly** is of paramount importance (see Kate L. **Turabian**'s *A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses and Dissertations*). All written work must be turned in **on time**. Late papers will be marked down one full letter grade unless you get permission for extension in the case of an extremely difficult situation. Papers are to be accompanied by **footnotes/endnotes**/in-text notes and **bibliographies** appropriately. See Handout 2 ("Turabian Style").
7. **Plagiarism**: Any student who commits plagiarism is in violation of Seminary policy and is liable for dismissal.

### **GRADING**

A letter grade will be given based on the grades of work done:

- A** (95-100), **A-** (90-94)  
**B+** (87-89), **B** (83-86), **B-** (80-82)  
**C+** (77-79), **C** (73-76), **C-** (70-72)  
**D** (60-69), **F** (less than 60)

From the *Seminary 2001-03 Catalog*, 28:

- A** Exceptional work: surpassing or outstanding achievement of course objectives  
**B** Good work: strong, significant achievement of course objectives  
**C** Acceptable work: basic, essential achievement of course objectives  
**D** Marginal work: inadequate, minimal achievement of course objectives  
**F** Unacceptable work: failure to achieve course objectives

**COURSE SCHEDULE & OUTLINE**

**\*Each student needs to take one figure as his/her own presentation/research figure. We will choose only one figure (most likely the bold one) among 2 figures from Oct 5 to Dec 7.**

Date	Topic	Reading Assignments
<b>Sep 7</b>	Introduction and Overview	
	Models of Patristic Studies	
<b>Sep 14</b>	Scripture and Patristic Studies	<i>Reading Scripture with the Church Fathers</i>
	ACCS (Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture)	Oden, "General Introduction" in <i>ACCS, NT Ia: Matthew 1-13</i> , xi-xxxi. Hall, "Introduction" in <i>Ancient and Postmodern Christianity</i> , 7-12.
<b>Sep 21</b>	Context: Trinitarian Controversy	Pelikan, <i>The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition</i> , 172-225. Rusch, ed. "Introduction" in <i>The Trinitarian Controversy</i> , 17-27.
<b>Sep 28</b>	Context: Christological Controversy	Pelikan, <i>The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition</i> , 226-77, 332-59. Norris, ed. "Introduction" in <i>The Christological Controversy</i> , 1-31.
<b>Oct 5 (P1)</b>	Aphrahat (270s-340s)	<i>23 Demonstrations</i> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>On Faith (Demonstration 1);</li> <li>On Pastors (Demonstration 10);</li> <li>On Christ the Son of God (Demonstration 17)</li> </ul>
	<b>Ephraim the Syrus (306-73)</b>	<i>Hymns on the Nativity of Christ in the Flesh</i>
<b>Oct 12 (P2)</b>	Hilary of Poitiers?? (315-67/8)	<i>On the Trinity</i> : Book 1; Book 10.
	<b>Cyril of Jerusalem (315-87)</b>	<i>5 Mystagogic Catecheses</i> : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>First Lecture on the Mysteries (Lecture 19)</li> <li>On Baptism (Lecture 20)</li> <li>On Chrism (Lecture 21)</li> <li>On the Body and Blood of Christ (Lecture 22)</li> <li>On the Sacred Liturgy and Communion (Lecture 23)</li> </ul>

<b>Oct 19 (P3)</b>	Athanasius (296-373)	<i>The Life of St. Anthony</i>
	<b>Basil of Caesarea (330-79?)</b>	<i>De Spiritu Sancto</i>
<b>Oct 26 (P4)</b>	Gregory of Nazianzus (329/30-389/90)	<i>5 Theological Orations:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Introduction</li> <li>▪ On the Son (3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Orations)</li> <li>▪ On the Holy Spirit (5<sup>th</sup> Oration).</li> </ul>
	<b>Gregory of Nyssa (335-94?)</b>	<i>De Perfectione</i> <i>The Life of Moses (27-137)</i>
<b>Nov 2 (P5)</b>	Ambrose (334/7-97)	<i>De Fide ad Gratianum</i> (On the Christian Faith): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Preface (1-36)</li> <li>▪ Book II (36-66)</li> <li>▪ Book III (66-97).</li> </ul>
	<b>John Chrysostom (347-407)</b>	<i>On the Vanity of the Riches</i> <i>On Wealth and Poverty</i>
<b>Nov 9 (P6)</b>	Jerome (Eusebius Hieronymus) (347-420)??	<i>The Vulgate</i>
	<b>John Cassian (365-435)</b>	<i>24 Conferences:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The Goal or Objective of the Monk (Conference 1)</li> <li>▪ On Prayer (Conferences 9 &amp; 10)</li> <li>▪ On Perfection (Conference 11)</li> <li>▪ On Spiritual Knowledge (Conference 14)</li> </ul>
<b>Nov 16</b>	No Class	
<b>Nov 23</b>	<b>READING WEEK</b>	
<b>Nov 30 (P7)</b>	Cyril of Alexandria (378-444)	<i>On the Unity of Christ</i>
	<b>Vincent of Lerins (?-before 450)</b>	<i>Commonitorium</i> (The Commonitory)
<b>Dec 7 (P8)</b>	<b>John of Damascus (650 or 675?-745)</b>	<i>An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith:</i> Books 1-4
	CONCLUSION & EVALUATION	
<b>Dec 14</b>	<b>FINAL PAPER DUE</b>	

**REFERENCE LIST**

	<b>Works</b>
Eusebius of Caesarea (263-339/40?)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>The Ecclesiastical History</i></li> <li>• <i>Vita Constantini</i> (Life of Constantine)</li> </ul>
Aphrahat (270s-340s): The first Father of the Syrian Church	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>23 Demonstrations</i> (intra): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Faith (Demonstration 1)</li> <li>▪ Resurrection of the Dead (Demonstration 8);</li> <li>▪ Pastors (Demonstration 10);</li> <li>▪ Christ the Son of God (Demonstration 17);</li> <li>▪ Persecution (Demonstration 21);</li> <li>▪ Death and the End Times (Demonstration 22).</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Ephraim Syrus (306-73)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Nisibene Hymns</i> (intra)</li> <li>• <i>Hymns on the Nativity of Christ in the Flesh</i> (intra or <i>Ephrem the Syrian: Hymns</i>. Trans. Kathleen McVey. Paulist Press, 1989: 61-217).</li> <li>• <i>Hymns for Epiphany</i> (intra)</li> <li>• <i>Hymns on Paradise</i> (intra or <i>Ephrem the Syrian: Hymns on Paradise</i>. St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1998: 77-195).</li> <li>• <i>The Pearl</i> (intra)</li> <li>• <i>Homily on Our Lord</i> (intra)</li> <li>• <i>Homily on Admonition and Repentance</i> (intra)</li> <li>• <i>Homily on the Sinful Woman</i> (intra)</li> </ul>
Hilary of Poitiers (315-67/8)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>De Trinitate</i> (On the Trinity) (intra): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Introduction (1-4);</li> <li>▪ Part 1: Book 2-3;</li> <li>▪ Part 2: Book 4-7;</li> <li>▪ Part 3: Book 8-12: Book 10 (235-65); Book 11 (266-85)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Cyril of Jerusalem (315-87)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Pre-Lenten <i>Procatechesis</i> (intra)</li> <li>• 18 <i>Catecheses</i> during Lent (intra)</li> <li>• 5 <i>Mystagogic Catecheses</i> in Easter after Baptism (intra)</li> </ul>
Athanasius (296-373)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Life of Anthony</i> (357) (intra or Gregg, Athanasius, <i>The Life of Anthony and The Letter to Marcellus</i>, CWS. Paulist Press, 1980).</li> <li>• <i>Apology Against the Arians</i> (357)</li> <li>• <i>Orations contra Arianos</i> (358)</li> </ul>
<b>Basil the Great (Basil of Caesarea) (330-79?)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Contra Eunomium</i></li> <li>• <i>De Spiritu Sancto</i> (intra)</li> </ul>



<p>Gregory of Nazianzus (329/30-389/90)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>5 Theological Orations</i> (intra or F. W. Norris, <i>Faith Gives Fullness to Reasoning</i> with Eng. Translation of the Five Theological Orations by L. Wickham and F. Williams. Critical, ed., A. J. Mason. Cambridge Patristic Texts, 1899):             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Introduction to the Theological Orations;</li> <li>▪ First Theological Oration;</li> <li>▪ <i>Of the Son</i> (3<sup>rd</sup> Oration=Oration 29; 4<sup>th</sup> Oration=Oration 29);</li> <li>▪ <i>Of the Holy Spirit</i> (5<sup>th</sup> Oration=Oration 32)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>Gregory of Nyssa (335-94?)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Catechetical Orations</i>:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Trinity;</li> <li>▪ Reasonableness of the Incarnation;</li> <li>▪ Redemption</li> <li>▪ The Sacraments of Baptism and the Eucharist</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <i>De Spiritu Sancto</i></li> <li>• <i>De Perfectione</i></li> </ul>
<p>Ambrose (337 or 339-97)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>On the Christian Faith</i>:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Preface (1-36)</li> <li>▪ Book II (36-66)</li> <li>▪ Book III (66-97)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• <i>On the Mysteries</i> (intra)</li> <li>• <i>On the Duties of the Clergy</i></li> </ul>
<p>John Chrysostom (347-407)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>On the Priesthood</i></li> <li>• <i>On Marriage and Family Life</i> (John Chrysostom. <i>On Marriage and Family Life</i>. St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2000).</li> <li>• <i>On the Vanity of the Riches</i> <i>On Wealth and Poverty</i> (John Chrysostom. <i>On Wealth and Poverty</i>. St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1999).</li> </ul>
<p>Jerome (Eusebius Hieronymus) (345-420)</p>	<p><i>The Vulgate</i></p>
<p>John Cassian (ca. 365-ca. 435)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>24 Conferences</i> (intra):             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ On the Goal or Aim of the Monk</li> <li>▪ On Discretion</li> <li>▪ On the Three Sorts of Renunciations</li> <li>▪ On the Lust of the Flesh and of the Spirit</li> <li>▪ On the Eight Principal Faults</li> <li>▪ On the Death of the Saints</li> <li>▪ On Inconsistency of Mind and Spiritual Wickedness</li> <li>▪ On Principalities</li> <li>▪ On Prayer</li> <li>▪ On Prayer</li> <li>▪ On Perfection</li> <li>▪ On the Protection of God</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<b>John Cassian</b> <b>(ca. 365-ca. 435)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ On Spiritual Knowledge</li> <li>▪ On Divine Gifts</li> <li>▪ On Friendship</li> <li>▪ On Making Promises</li> <li>▪ On the Three Sorts of Monks</li> <li>▪ On the Aim of the Coenobite Hermit</li> <li>▪ On the End of Penitence and the Marks of Satisfaction</li> <li>▪ On the Relaxation during the Fifty Days</li> <li>▪ 23. On Sinlessness</li> <li>▪ 24. On Mortification</li> </ul>
<b>Cyril of Alexandria</b> <b>(378-444)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>On the Unity of Christ</i> (Cyril of Alexandria. <i>On the Unity of Christ</i>, trans. John McGuckin. St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2000: 49-133).</li> <li>• <i>The Epistle to Nestorius</i></li> <li>• <i>The Epistle of Cyril to Nestorius</i></li> <li>• <i>Second Letter to Nestorius</i></li> <li>• <i>Third Letter to Nestorius</i></li> <li>• <i>The Letter of Cyril to John of Antioch</i></li> <li>• John McGuckin, <i>St. Cyril of Alexandria, The Christological Controversy: Its History, Theology, and Texts</i>, Vigiliae Christianae: Texts and Studies of Early Christian Life and Language, ed. J. Denboeft, vol. XXIII (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1994)</li> <li>• Thomas P. Halton, Introduction to St. Cyril of Alexandria: Letters 1-50. The Fathers of the Church, ed. Thomas P. Halton. Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1987.</li> </ul>
<b>Vincent of Lerins</b> <b>(?-before 450)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Commonitorium</i> (The Commonitory, 435) (intra).</li> </ul>
<b>John of Damascus</b> <b>(655 or 675?-ca. 749)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Phgh; gnwvsew"</i> (Fount of Knowledge): an encyclopedia of Christian theology</li> <li>• <i>Dialectica</i> (an intellectual vision via concepts of Aristotelian philosophy)</li> <li>• <i>Heresies</i> (a copy of a similar work by Epiphanius)</li> <li>• <i>An Exposition of the Orthodox Faith</i> (4 Books, 100 Chapters) (intra): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Chap 1-14 (on the Trinity)</li> <li>▪ Chap 15-44 (on the visible and invisible creation)</li> <li>▪ Chap 45-81 (on Christology)</li> <li>▪ Chap 82-99 (baptism, veneration of the cross, images)</li> <li>▪ Chap 100 (resurrection)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>